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(54) TRUCK BED LINER

(54) STRUCTURE DE PROTECTION DE FOND DE VEHICULES A MARCHANDISES

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ABSTRACT:

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http://patents1.ic.gc.ca/details?patent_number=1330572&language=EN_CA

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE A protective liner for a truck cargo bed which allows structures positioned in the cargo bed to be supported and affixed in position in the truck cargo bed. Side and front walls of the protective liner have formed thereupon a plurality of vertically extending ridge members. A storage container having formed on outer surfaces thereupon similar vertically extending ridge members engages with the protective liner in an interfiting and interlocking relationship, to thereby support and affix the storage container in the truck cargo bed.

CLAIMS: Show all claims

*** Note: Data on abstracts and claims is shown in the official language in which it was submitted.

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TRUCK BED LINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention: The present invention relates generally to truck bed liners, and, more particularly, to a protective truck bed liner which allows a structure positioned in a truck cargo bed to be affixed in position in the truck cargo bed to be supported thereby.

2. Description of the Prior Art: Pick-up trucks, long utilized as working vehicles, have, in recent years, become accepted for use as family cars. Pick-up trucks have also, of recent years, gained popularity as sport vehicles. Because of the multiple uses of a pick-up truck, attempts have been made to adapt the same pick-up truck to allow usage as a working vehicle in some instances, and a family car in other instances.

When the pick-up truck is utilized as a working vehicle, the aesthetic appearance of the pick-up truck is of little concern to the user. However, when the same pick-up truck is to be utilized as a family car, or as a sport vehicle, the aesthetic appearance of the pick-up truck is of substantial importance.

Many attempts to adapt the vehicle for dual usage provide some sort of protective layer or liner positioned in the cargo area of the pick-up truck to prevent the cargo area floor and walls from scratches, chips, and dents resulting from haulage of cargo in the truck cargo bed. When so desired, the protective



liner may be easily removed from the cargo bed. Numerous truck liners are known in the art including U.S. Patent No. 4,181,349 to Nix et al., U.S. Patent No. 3,881,768 to Nix, U.S. Patent No. 4,336,963 to Nix et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,162,098 to Richardson III, U.S. Patent No. 4,161,335 to Nix et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,740,027 to Ormiston, U.S. Patent No. 4,341,412 to Wayne, U.S. Patent No. 4,111,481 to Nix et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,592,583 to Dresen et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,245,863 to Carter, U.S. Patent No. 3,814,473 to Lorenzen, Jr., U.S. Patent No. 4,540,214 to Wagner, and U.S. Patent No. 4,592,583 to Dresen, et al. Each of the aforementioned patents disclose truck bed liners and/or protective inserts for the truck bed of a pick-up truck.

One disadvantage of a pick-up truck is the lack of storage space in the cab area of the pick-up truck. As a result, portable storage containers are placed in the cargo area of the pick-up truck for allowing the storage therewithin of material. For instance, quite frequently, tool chests are mounted in the cargo area of the pick-up truck to allow the storage therewithin of tools. However, the storage container must be securely attached to the pick-up truck. Otherwise, the storage container may slide about the cargo bed. This oftentimes necessitates the drilling of holes into the sidewalls and/or frontwalls of the truck cargo bed. In the event that a protective liner is also positioned in the truck cargo bed, bores must also be drilled through the truck bed liner to allow the storage container to be securely affixed to the pick-up truck. Such action makes removal

of the truck bed liner from the truck cargo area more difficult and burdensome. Portability is a significant feature of many of the aforementioned prior art truck bed liners. Attachment of storage containers to the pick-up truck therefore greatly lessens the usefulness of many of the prior art truck bed liners.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a truck bed liner for a pick-up truck which allows a structure to be supported thereto, but easily removable therefrom.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention, a protective liner for a truck cargo bed is disclosed. The protective liner allows a structure positioned in the cargo bed to be supported and affixed in position in the truck cargo bed. The protective liner includes a liner floor portion positioned upon a floor portion of the truck cargo bed floor, with the liner bottom portion having elevated portions formed thereupon to conform to wheelwells protruding from the truck cargo bed floor. Upwardly extending liner sidewall portions extend upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion, with each of the liner sidewall portions being positioned against sidewall portions of the truck cargo bed. An upwardly extending liner frontwall portion extends upwardly from a front end portion of the liner floor portion, with the liner frontwall portion being positioned against a frontwall portion of the truck cargo bed. Ridge means are formed on

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the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions and are adapted to engage with the structure positioned in the cargo bed to affix the structure to the liner sidewall portions, supporting the structure thereby.

5 In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the means formed on the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions include a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members protruding from the liner sidewall portions whereby gaps separating adjacent ones of the ridge members form load locks of a depth sufficient to anchor an end of the structure positioned in the truck cargo bed. Preferably, the load locks formed on opposite liner sidewall portions are situated to allow a first end of the structure to be anchored in a load lock formed on a first liner sidewall portion, and a second end of the structure to be anchored in a load lock formed on a second liner sidewall portion.

10 While the structure supported in the cargo bed may simply be a length of wood, in the preferred embodiment, the structure supported and affixed in the truck cargo bed is a storage container, such as a tool chest. Preferably, the tool chest is of a length to span a width of the truck cargo bed such that opposite ends of the tool chest abut against the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions positioned against the opposite sidewalls of the truck cargo bed. The opposite ends of the tool chest may further include means adapted to engage with the liner sidewall portions in an interlocking relationship, and may

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include a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members.

In a further embodiment of the present invention, the storage container further abuts against the upwardly extending liner frontwall portion, and the upwardly extending liner frontwall portion may further include a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members protruding from the liner frontwall portions. The storage container may similarly have formed on the front side portion thereof a means adapted to engage with the liner frontwall portion in an interlocking relationship, and may include a plurality of vertically extending ridge members.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be better understood when read in light of the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a pick-up truck having the truck bed liner of the present invention positioned in the cargo area thereof;

Figure 2 is a partial, cut-away view of the truck bed liner of the present invention;

Figures 3A, 3B, and 3C are front, side, and overhead views, respectively, of a storage container which may be removably affixed to the truck bed liner of the present invention;

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Figure 4 is a detail view of the inter-fitting relationship between the storage container and protective liner of the present invention; and

Figure 5 is a perspective illustration of the fullest embodiment of the present invention in which the storage container of Figure 3 is supported in the truck bed liner of Figure 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring first to the perspective illustration of Figure 1, there is shown a pick-up truck 10 having a cab area 12 and a cargo bed area 14. The truck bed liner 16 of the present invention is positioned within the cargo bed 14. While in the preferred embodiment, truck bed liner 16 is comprised of a polyethylene material which is molded to form a single, integral unit, and the following detailed description of the liner 16 will describe the present invention as such, it is to be understood that, alternatively, other materials of construction may be utilized to form liner 16 of the present invention.

Truck bed liner 16 of the present invention is shown in greater detail in the cut-away view of Figure 2. Truck bed liner 16 is shown to include liner floor portion 18, liner sidewall portions 20 and 22 (only a portion of portion 22 is illustrated in Figure 2), and liner frontwall portion 24. Liner sidewall portions 20 and 22 are positioned to extend upwardly from opposite sides of liner floor portion 18, and liner frontwall

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portion 24 is positioned to extend upwardly from a front end of liner floor portion 18. Liner floor portion 18 further includes elevated portions 26 conforming to wheel wells protruding from the truck cargo bed floor. Formed as such, truck bed liner 16 substantially covers the entire cargo bed 14 of pick-up truck 10. Bed liner 16 thereby protects cargo bed 14 from damage due to use of the pick-up truck 10 as a work vehicle.

Formed on the surface of liner sidewall portions 20 and 22 are a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members 28. While Figure 2 illustrates the inner surface of liner sidewall portion 20, the inner exposed surface of liner sidewall portion 22 is identical. Sidewall portions 20 and 22 further contain rail overlay portions 27 containing notched parts 27A. While in the preferred embodiment, each ridge member 28 is comprised of a lower portion 28A and an upper portion 28B, for reasons to be discussed hereinbelow, in the simplest embodiment of the present invention, ridge members 28 need not be comprised of portions 28A and 28B. Similarly, liner frontwall portion 24 also contains a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members 28.

Gaps formed between, and separating, adjacent ones of the ridge members 28 form load locks of a depth sufficient to anchor a structure to prevent longitudinal movement of the member in the cargo bed 14 of the pick-up 10. For example, a length of wood, such as a 2 x 4, may be positioned so that a first end

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thereof is positioned within a gap 30 between adjacent ridge members 28 formed on liner sidewall portion 20, and a second end of the length of the wood may be positioned to extend into a gap 30 separating two adjacent ridge members 28 formed on a surface of liner sidewall portion 22.

In the preferred embodiment of the truck bed liner 16 illustrated in Figure 2, liner sidewall portion 20 is formed of two vertically extending parts 20A and 20B, and horizontally extending part 20C. This arrangement increases the structural strength of the sidewall 20, and also provides a horizontal surface upon which a bottom end portion of a structure, such as the end portion of the length of wood, may be supported.

Illustrated in the preferred embodiment of Figure 2, horizontal part 20C is formed at an elevation above floor portion 18 to merge into the elevated portion 26. The horizontal part 20C and elevated portions 26 are convenient support sites for sheet like cargo such as plywood. When so supported a sheet of plywood divides the cargo bed into upper and lower compartments which are above and below the plywood. Also illustrated in the preferred embodiment of the liner 16 are notches 30 formed by the gap between two ridge members 28. Notches 30 contain horizontal surfaces and similarly function as load locks to anchor a support member such as a length of wood to prevent longitudinal movement along the truck cargo bed 14 and to provide additional support for sheet forms of cargo.

Turning now to the illustrations of Figures 3A-3C, there are shown side, overhead, and end views, respectively, of storage container 34 of the preferred embodiment which may be affixed in position in the truck cargo bed by truck bed liner 16. Storage container 34 preferably provides shoulder portion 38 of dimensions allowing the end portions of shoulder portion 38 to rest upon notched part 27A of rail overlay 27.

Similar to ridge members 28 formed on the inner surfaces of liner sidewall portions 20 and 22, and liner frontwall portion 24, storage container 34 also has formed on the outer surfaces thereof a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members 40. Ridge members 40, again, are similarly preferably comprised of sections 40A and 40B, and the ends and frontwall of storage container 34 contain a horizontal step to allow positioning upon horizontal section 20C of the liner sidewall portion 20. This arrangement allows ridge members 40 on a front side of storage container 34 to engage with ridge members 28 formed on the surface of liner frontwall portion 24, and ridge members 40 positioned on the side surface of storage container 34 to engage with ridge members 28 formed on liner sidewall portions 20 and 22. When suitably positioned, ribs 40 formed on the storage container 34, and ridge member 28 formed on portions 20-24 of the liner, engage with one another in an interfitting relationship thereby preventing movement of storage container 34. This relationship is illustrated in the detail

view of Figure 4. Furthermore, the downward load exerted by storage container 34 due to the weight thereof is distributed across shoulder portion 38, and step 42.

Referring to the perspective illustration of Figure 5, there is shown pick-up truck 10 having truck bed liner 16 and storage container 34 of the present invention positioned in the cargo bed area 14 thereof. The interlocking relationship between ridges 28 and 40 prevents movement of storage container 34. Also illustrated in Figure 5 is a length of wood 44 having opposite ends thereof anchored in notches 30 to be supported thereby.

While the present invention has been described in connection with the preferred embodiments shown in the various figures, it is to be understood that other similar embodiments may be used or modifications and additions may be made to the described embodiments for performing the same functions of the present invention without deviating therefrom. Therefore, the present invention should not be limited to any single embodiment, but rather construed in breadth and scope in accordance with the recitation of the appended claims.

1. A protective liner for a truck cargo bed, said protective liner permitting structure positioned in the vehicle cargo bed to be supported and affixed in position in the cargo bed, said liner including: a liner floor portion positioned upon a floor of the vehicle cargo bed; said liner floor portion having elevated portions formed thereupon to conform to wheel wells protruding from the vehicle cargo bed floor; liner sidewall portions extending upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion, one of each of said liner sidewall portions being positionable against one of a pair of opposite sidewalls of the vehicle cargo bed; a liner frontwall portion extending upwardly from a front end of the liner floor portion, said liner frontwall portion being positionable against a frontwall of the vehicle cargo bed; and a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members protruding in a common place from the liner sidewall portions for at least a substantially part of the entire height thereof whereby gaps separating adjacent ones of the ridge members of each liner sidewall portion form cooperative opposed load locks of a depth sufficient to receive opposite ends of the structure positioned in a vehicle cargo bed in order to affix the

movement in the vehicle cargo bed includes a storage container.

10. The liner of claim 9 wherein said storage container substantially spans a width of the vehicle cargo bed such that opposite ends of the storage container abut against the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions positioned against opposite sidewall portions of the vehicle cargo bed.

11. The liner of claim 10 wherein said opposite ends of the storage container include means adapted to engage with the liner sidewall portions in an interlocking relationship.

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12. The liner of claim 11 wherein said means adapted to engage with the liner sidewall portions includes a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members.

13. A system for preventing cargo placed in a vehicle cargo bed from moving therein, said system including, in combination: at least one cargo elongated structure; and a protective liner comprising: a liner floor portion positionable upon a floor of the vehicle cargo bed, said liner floor portion having elevated portions formed thereupon to conform to wheel wells protruding from the vehicle cargo bed floor; liner sidewall portions extending upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion, one of each of said liner sidewall portions being positionable against one of a pair of opposite sidewalls of the vehicle cargo bed; a liner frontwall portion extending upwardly from a front end of the liner floor portion, said liner frontwall portion being positionable against a frontwall of the vehicle cargo bed; and a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members protruding from the liner sidewall portions for substantially the entire height thereof whereby gaps separating adjacent ones of the ridge members form load locks of a depth sufficient to receive opposite ends of the at least one elongated

14 structure in order to affix the at least one elongated structure against movement in the vehicle cargo bed, whereby proper placement and affixation of the at least one elongated structure in said load locks serves to prevent movement of cargo placed in the vehicle cargo bed.

14. The system of claim 13 wherein said plurality of spaced apart, stepped vertically extending ridge members comprise a plurality of upper sections and a plurality of lower sections, and for each respective liner sidewall portion said plurality of upper sections are laterally outwardly stepped relative to said plurality of lower sections, said load locks being formed between

adjacent ones of said ridge members.

15. The system of claim 13 further comprising means for affixing cargo placed in said liner against lateral movement in said liner.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein said means for affixing comprise means for securing cargo to said at least one elongated structure.

17. A protective liner for a vehicle cargo bed having a floor wall, endwall and opposed sidewalls, said protective liner protectively covering such bed walls of the cargo bed while supported thereby, said liner comprising: a liner floor portion positionable upon the floor of the vehicle cargo bed; liner sidewall portions contiguous with and extending upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion, each of said liner sidewall portions having a height when positioned against a different one of said bed opposed sidewalls of the vehicle cargo bed to extend in the supporting contact therewith substantially the entire height of the cargo bed sidewalls; a liner endwall portion contiguous with and extending from an end of the liner floor portion upwardly along said endwall of the vehicle cargo bed; and a plurality of spaced apart ridge members protruding from the liner sidewall portions for substantially the entire height thereof and at spaced apart intervals such that gaps separating adjacent ones of the ridge members form load locks situated on both of said opposed liner sidewall portions, said load locks being situated in an opposing cooperative relation so as to receive end portions of an elongated structure when transversing said liner floor portion, said ridge members having sufficient depth to provide load bearing surfaces engageable with opposed surfaces of the received end portions of said elongated structure when positioned in opposing load locks of the liner sidewalls in order to affix and support said elongated structure, against movement toward and away from said liner endwall portion in the vehicle cargo bed.

18. The liner of claim 17 wherein said plurality of spaced apart vertically extending ridge members for each of said opposed liner sidewall portions comprise a plurality of upper load lock and a plurality of lower load locks.

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19. The liner of claim 18 further comprising means for imparting rigidity to said liner sidewall portions and for providing structure support surfaces in the load locks comprised of said plurality of upper load locks.

20. The liner of claim 19 wherein said means for imparting rigidity to said liner sidewall portions and for providing structure support surfaces comprise a substantially horizontal surface formed in each said liner sidewall portion and extending substantially the entire length thereof.

21. The liner of claim 20 wherein said liner floor portion includes elevated portions to conform to wheel wells protruding from said floor wall of said cargo bed.

22. The liner of claim 17 wherein said elongated structure affixed against movement in the vehicle cargo bed includes a storage container.

23. The liner of claim 22 wherein said storage container substantially spans a width of the vehicle cargo bed such that opposite ends of the storage container abut against the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions positioned against opposite sidewall portions of the vehicle cargo bed the opposite ends of the storage container include means adapted to engage with said load lock on said liner sidewall portions in an interlocking relationship.

24. The liner of claim 24 wherein said means adapted to engage with the liner sidewall portions includes a plurality of spaced apart and vertically extending ridge members.

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25. A protective liner for a vehicle cargo bed having a floor wall, endwall and opposed sidewalls, said protective liner protectively covering at least such endwall and opposed sidewall of cargo bed while supported thereby, said liner comprising: liner sidewall portions extending upwardly from opposite sides of the bed floor wall, each of said liner sidewall portions having a height when positioned against a different one of said bed opposed sidewalls of the vehicle cargo bed extend substantially the entire height of the cargo bed sidewalls; a liner endwall portion extending from an end of the liner floor portion upwardly along said endwall of the vehicle cargo bed; and a plurality of spaced apart ridge members protruding from the liner sidewall portions for substantially the entire height thereof and at spaced apart intervals such that gaps separating adjacent ones of the ridge members form load locks situated on both of said opposed liner sidewall portions, said load locks being situated in an opposing cooperative relation so as to receive end portions of an elongated structure when transversing the bed floor said ridge members having sufficient strength and depth to provide load bearing surfaces engageable with opposed surfaces

of the received end portions of said elongated structure when positioned in opposing load locks of the liner sidewalls in order to affix and support said elongated

18 structure against movement toward and away from said liner endwall portion of the vehicle cargo bed.

26. The liner of claim 17 wherein said plurality of spaced apart vertically extending ridge members for each of said opposed liner sidewall portions comprise a plurality of upper load locks and a plurality of lower load locks.

27. A protective liner for a cargo bed of a vehicle, said protective liner allowing a structure positioned in the truck cargo bed to be supported and affixed in position in the vehicle cargo bed, including: a liner floor portion having elevated portions formed thereupon to conform to wheel wells protruding from the cargo bed floor; upwardly extending liner sidewall portions extending upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion an upwardly extending liner frontwall portion extending upwardly from a front end of the liner floor portion; and means formed on the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions including a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members protruding from the liner sidewall portions and forming load locks in gaps separating adjacent ones of the ridge members, said load locks having a depth sufficient to anchor a structure positioned and supported in the cargo bed.

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28. The liner of claim 27 wherein said load locks are formed on opposite liner sidewall portions and are situated to allow a first end of said structure to be anchored in a load lock formed on a first liner sidewall portion, and a second end of said structure to be anchored in an opposed load lock formed on a second liner sidewall portion.

29. The liner according to claim 27 wherein said plurality of spaced apart and vertically extending ridge members of each of said liner sidewall portions comprise a plurality of upper sections load locks and a plurality of lower sections load locks, and for each respective liner sidewall portion said plurality of upper sections load locks are laterally outwardly stepped relative to said plurality of lower sections, said load locks being formed between adjacent ones of said plurality of upper sections and adjacent ones of said plurality of lower sections load locks.

30. The protective liner of claim 27 wherein said load locks consist essentially of a plurality of immediately adjacent

anchoring sites, each of said sites being bounded on opposite sides thereof by said ridge members.

31. The protective liner of claim 27 wherein more than one of said plurality of ridge members are provided on each of said liner sidewall portions at locations both forwardly and rearwardly of said elevated portions.

32. A protective liner for a cargo bed of a vehicle, said protective liner allowing a structure positioned in the cargo bed including: a liner floor portion having elevated portions formed thereupon to conform to wheel wells protruding from the cargo bed floor; upwardly extending liner sidewall portions extending upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion; an upwardly extending liner frontwall portion extending upwardly from a front end of the liner floor portion; and ridge means formed on the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions adapted to engage with the structure positioned in the cargo bed to affix the structure to the liner sidewall portions, supporting the structure thereby, wherein the structure supported and affixed in position in the truck cargo bed includes a storage container.

33. The protective liner of claim 32 wherein said storage container spans a width of the truck cargo bed such that opposite ends of the storage container abut against the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions positioned against opposite sidewall portions of the truck cargo bed.

34. The protective liner of claim 33 wherein the opposite ends of the storage container include means adapted to engage with the liner sidewall portions in an interlocking relationship.

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35. The protective liner of claim 34 wherein said means adapted to engage with the liner sidewall portions includes a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members.

36. The protective liner of claim 29 wherein said storage container further abuts against the upwardly extending liner frontwall portion.

37. The protective liner of claim 36 wherein said upwardly extending liner frontwall portion includes a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members.

38. The protective liner of claim 36 wherein said storage container has formed on a front side portion thereof means

adapted to engage with the liner frontwall portion in an interlocking relationship.

39. The protective liner of claim 38 wherein said means adapted to engage with the liner frontwall portion includes a plurality of spaced apart, vertically extending ridge members.

40. A protective liner for a truck cargo bed, said protective liner allowing a structure positioned in the truck cargo bed to be supported and affixed in position in the truck cargo bed, including: a liner floor portion positioned upon a floor portion of the truck cargo bed, said liner floor portion having elevated portions formed thereupon to conform to wheel wells protruding from the truck cargo bed floor; upwardly extending liner sidewall portions extending upwardly from opposite sides of the liner floor portion, each of

22 said liner sidewall portions being positioned against sidewall portions of the truck cargo bed; upwardly extending liner frontwall portion extending upwardly from a front end of the liner floor portion, said liner frontwall portion being positioned against a frontwall portion of the truck cargo bed; and ridge means formed on the upwardly extending liner sidewall portions adapted to engage with the structure positioned in the truck cargo bed to affix the structure to the liner sidewall portions, supporting the structure thereby.

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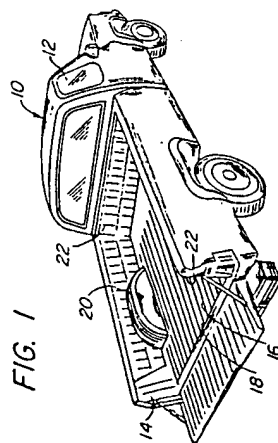


FIG. 1

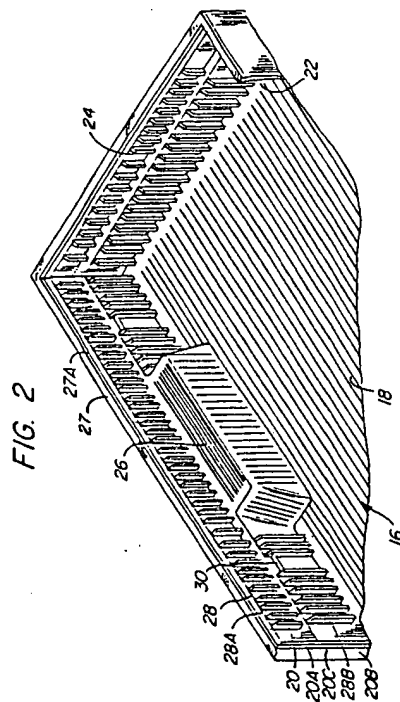


FIG. 2

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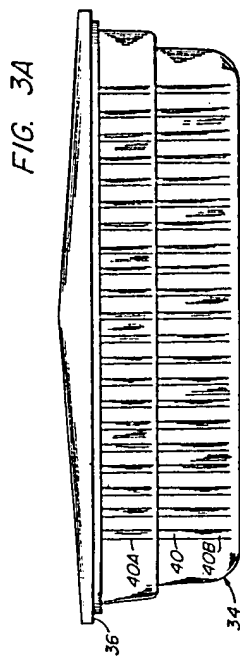


FIG. 3A

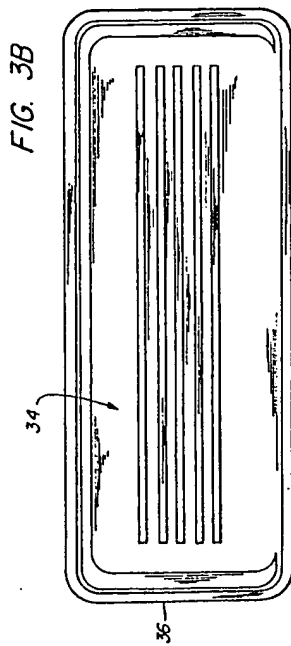


FIG. 3B

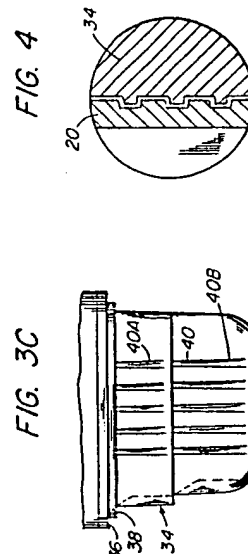
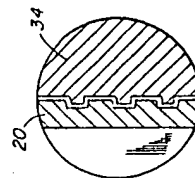


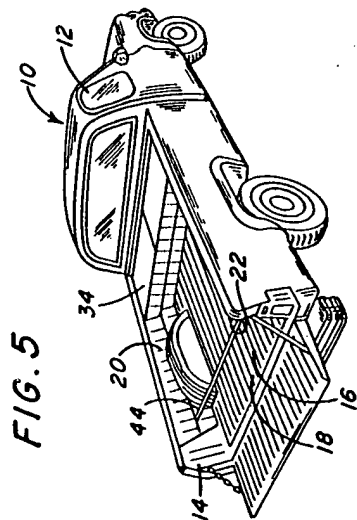
FIG. 3C

FIG. 4



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